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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8327
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2175
RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0036
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3723
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0131
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1668
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2422
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000521

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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- CONTINUED IMPATIENCE WITH IMPLEMENTATION
OF AUTONOMY

REF: JAKARTA 478 AND PREVIOUS

JAKARTA 00000521 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Many Papuans remain impatient with the slow pace of GOI implementation of the provinces' Special Autonomy Law, which is supposed to give the region enhanced self-governing powers. President Yudhoyono is moving to resolve one outstanding issue, the legal status of West Papua, which the GOI wants to include under autonomy provisions. The longer it takes to implement autonomy, the more tensions will bubble up in the already restive region. END SUMMARY.

PAPUANS QUESTION SPECIAL AUTONOMY

¶2. (SBU) The past week has witnessed an uptick in Papuan criticism of the lagging implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law. (Note: Under the 2001 Special Autonomy Law, the provincial government assumes responsibility for all areas of governance except foreign affairs, defense and security, fiscal and monetary policy, religious affairs and justice. The law also returns most of the revenue generated by the province, which had been paid to the central government, to provincial authorities. End note.) Student groups recently held peaceful demonstrations in favor of a referendum on Papuan self-determination in Jayapura and Manokwari, the respective capitals of Papua and West Papua provinces. Student leaders argue that the promised economic benefits of Special Autonomy have yet to reach Papuans, and promise more rallies in cities and towns across the two provinces. So far, the rallies have been small--100-200 participants each--and peaceful. There are no reports of arrests connected with the demonstrations.

¶3. (C) Some Papuan leaders have joined the fray. Agus Alua, chairman of the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP), has also publicly called for a dialogue on Special Autonomy. Speaking to reporters, Alua agreed with the students that Special Autonomy had failed to deliver expected benefits. He called on the national government to renegotiate the 2001 deal with Papuans. Another leader, Papuan People's Council Chairman Forkorus Yaboysebut, told poloff he believed the central

government had no intention of fully ceding key powers to the provincial government.

PROGRESS ON LEGAL STATUS OF WEST PAPUA

14. (C) President Yudhoyono promised to resolve at least one outstanding issue: the legal status of West Papua Province. Speaking after a March 5 meeting with Papuan leaders in Jakarta, President Yudhoyono promised to issue a presidential regulation that would settle the matter. (Note: President Megawati created West Papua--then called West Irian Jaya--through a January 2003 presidential order. The existence of West Papua remains controversial, and in legal limbo, because it was not created according to the procedures set out in the 2001 Special Autonomy Law for Papua.) Yudhoyono promised to issue the new edict by the end of May.

15. (C) The new regulation would bring West Papua fully under the Special Autonomy law. This would include guaranteeing West Papua a share of the funds that Jakarta returns to the province under the law. (Note: The governors of Papua and West Papua have already agreed to share Special Autonomy funds, but this arrangement is not codified in law.) The new regulation would also create a coordinating body to work with external donors on behalf of both provinces.

16. (C) Yudhoyono also promised to institute a moratorium on the creation of new provinces in Papua. The frequent rumors that the central government plans to subdivide Papua into further provinces fuels Papuan suspicions about Jakarta's "divide and rule" tactics.

17. (C) Papuan leaders pressed Yudhoyono hard to secure this commitment. Simon Morin, a Papuan member of the national legislature (DPR) who participated in the meeting with Yudhoyono, told poloff that Papuan leaders reminded Yudhoyono

JAKARTA 00000521 002.2 OF 002

that because the region overwhelmingly supported him in the 2004 election, he owed them a favor.

ENOUGH BLAME TO GO AROUND

18. (C) During a March 6 panel discussion, Forum Papua--a group of senior Jakarta-based Papua watchers which includes current and former GOI officials, journalists and academics--criticized Papuan leaders for not doing their part to implement Special Autonomy. Theo Waimuri, a senior Papuan civil servant and former Indonesian Ambassador to Namibia, chided Papua's regents (district chiefs) for "obstructing" Special Autonomy. Panel members suggested that Governor Suebu's efforts to reach Papuans directly at the village level had alienated the regents and other local officials. As a result, the regents were attempting to block some of the governor's key development initiatives.

19. (C) Corruption and a lack of human capital in Papua also undermined the implementation of Special Autonomy, panelists agreed. Under Special Autonomy, Jakarta returns a significant portion of revenue from Papua's vast natural resources to the provincial government. Much of that money--nearly 30 trillion rupiah, or USD 3 billion--remains unspent. For one thing, the central government has failed to issue the administrative regulations necessary for the provincial government to begin spending the money. Further, the provincial government lacks the administrative structures and human capabilities to carry out Governor Suebu's ambitious development plans.

110. (C) Jakarta came in for a share of criticism too. Jayapura religious leader Karel Phil Erari echoed a familiar Papuan theme: that the central government has failed to consult with Papuans on key issues. The most recent example, he said, was Jakarta's issuance of the May 2007 presidential instruction on accelerated economic development in Papua without having adequately consulted Papuans. He agreed,

however, that Vice President Kalla's recent visit to Jayapura had made Papuans feel more included in Jakarta's decision making. Still, Papua Forum members agreed that Jakarta should make a more conscious effort to engage Papuans in a dialogue over issues of capital-province relations.

A NEED FOR FAST PROGRESS

¶11. (C) The longer it takes to implement autonomy provisions, the more tensions will bubble up in the already restive region. Papua is one of the poorest regions in the country and badly needs progress in development. In addition, there is the political issue--many Papuans continue to feel that decision-making is outside of their control and Jakarta has too large a role. While this may not be accurate, the GOI continues to make serious mistakes, such as its recent banning of a book considered separatist-inclined, and its arrest and trial of a human rights activist (reftel).

HUME